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NORTH VIETNAM:

North Vietnam does not regard either reconnaissance flights or limited US retaliatory air strikes as a stumbling block in Paris.]

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the North Vietnamese accept US reconnaissance and limited US air strikes as facts of life. Hanoi expects the US to continue reconnaissance and to retaliate when planes are fired upon. This would neither deter the North Vietnamese from trying to bring these planes down nor lead to a break in the Paris talks.]

Continued reconnaissance after the bombing stopped was immediately protested by Hanoi, and subsequent air strikes have occasioned strong and probably genuine outbursts of rage in Communist propaganda. In more than two years, however, Hanoi has failed to raise these matters as an excuse to stall, much less to break off the negotiations. The Communists treat reconnaissance and air strikes as different issues; air strikes are portrayed as a violation of the US agreement to stop the bombing, whereas reconnaissance is more routinely protested as a violation of North Vietnamese "sovereignty and security."]

Hanoi did not consider the prisoner rescue attempt an escalation of the war. Although North Vietnam has yet to reveal its hand on reaction to the prisoner raid, there was

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no immediate clamp-down on the flow of new information on prisoner status that had begun shortly before the raid of the 21st. Through its peace contacts in the US, Hanoi had begun for the first time to dole out information that enabled US officials to confirm the deaths of some prisoners.]

[Hanoi made a deliberate move to continue this flow after the raid by responding to a long-standing request for information from the French Government. Hanoi has also continued the traditional flow of holiday communications from the prisoners, including recorded Christmas greetings to prisoners' families and the dispatch of a large batch of letters from Hanoi after the raids.]

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THAILAND: [Foreign Minister Thanat is again pressing for a more flexible foreign policy, but important changes will be slow in coming.]

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[Bangkok's uneasiness over the steadfastness of the US commitment to Thailand has been a chronic problem. Thanat for over two years has been in the forefront of those Thai leaders who believe that better relations are needed with Communist countries, as a counterbalance to overreliance on the US. Although Thanat has long exercised a considerable influence over Thailand's foreign policy, he has made relatively little headway in redirecting its course. His failure is in part the consequence of recent events in Laos and Cambodia that have tended to increase Thailand's dependence on the US for its security. Thailand's room for maneuver has also been circumscribed because Peking has not picked up public and private overtures from Bangkok.]

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NOTES

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PAKISTAN: [The army in West Pakistan has been put on alert and all leaves canceled for a month, [redacted] The troops have been told that there is a possibility India will attack while Pakistanis are preoccupied with elections and the relief effort in East Pakistan. It is highly unlikely that India has any such plans. The alert is more likely intended to put the army in a better position to meet any trouble during national and provincial elections on 7 and 17 December.]

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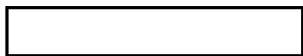
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